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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
29 APRIL 1953

WORLD REACTION TO THE EISENHOWER - PRAVDA EXCHANGE

Orbit comment on the PRAVDA editorial is marked by its insistence that the USSR retains the "peace" initiative.

Ambassador Bohlen interprets Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's remarks on a five-power peace pact as an obvious attempt to buttress PRAVDA's arguments. The Foreign Minister's generalities evade the specific points suggested by the President for settlement of world issues.

The Soviet home audience heard on 29 April a lengthy roundup of world press reaction to the PRAVDA article. Selected quotes from the US press asserted that:

1. US Congressional leaders are optimistic though cautious;
2. Despite official optimism of the Eisenhower Administration, many well-informed people in Washington -- particularly in the State Department -- see no possibility of a break in the cold war;
3. The White House statement was probably aimed at lessening the propaganda effect of the Soviet statement;
4. PRAVDA's reply has opened the door wide to the opportunity for talks;
5. The policy of the US Government and even the procedures it intends to employ are certainly not clear.

Moscow's coverage of Western European, Satellite and Indian reaction was concerned primarily with those statements favorable to the Kremlin's "peace initiative" and will to cooperate. Some unfavorable comment, however, was mentioned.

State Department review completed

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WESTERN EUROPE

The British Foreign Office assesses the reply as being primarily designed for propaganda warfare while at the same time lowering international temperature. It believes that the USSR has kept the door open, but is in no hurry for genuine negotiations on substantive matters. The Foreign Office sees no indication whatsoever that the USSR wishes talks on Germany, but is less sure of the Soviet attitude on Austria.

The Italian Foreign Ministry also feels that the USSR does not desire an over-all settlement, but may be willing to pay some price for a relaxation of tension and a slackening of the western defense build-up. In the Foreign Ministry's opinion, the effects of each concession, such as the exchange of prisoners of war in Korea, will be carefully appraised by the Kremlin to estimate how much more must be given to achieve its purpose.

According to the West German press, officials in Bonn reacted negatively but hinted that the article might deceive uncritical readers. In the opinion of these officials, PRAVDA does not present any proposals with a view to settling any East-West problems. They conclude that if the reply indicates Soviet reactions to Eisenhower's speech, there is more urgency than ever for the West to continue its present policies for arming Europe.

French Foreign Minister Bidault believes that the PRAVDA editorial may indicate that the Soviet Union will try to place the German question at the top of the agenda for a four-power meeting. He suggested anticipating this maneuver by early Western proposals which would forestall a Soviet call for such talks. Bidault suggested that this could best be accomplished by placing disarmament first on the agenda, followed by Austria and then Germany. Hostilities would have to cease everywhere before talks could begin.

French non-Communist editorials generally agreed that while the editorial revealed no new Soviet proposals on world problems, its moderate tone suggested the possibility of a peace conference with the necessary preliminary safeguards. The pro-government FIGARO saw in the reply a confirmation of a change in Soviet policy, although it remains to be seen whether this is a matter of evolution or tactics. The aftermath will depend on the West's capacity for initiative. The Socialist POPULAIRE notes that the primary problem remains the question of disarmament and that this Soviet tactic is probably aimed at dividing the Western allies, slowing down their defense effort, and winning Tito back. The independent rightist AUORE insists that for France there is only one test of Soviet sincerity - Indochina.

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Peiping Radio on 29 April endorsed the PRAVDA editorial in a long commentary and asserted that the United States should "make a careful study of the proposal and seek a compromise," rather than "dismiss and reject it." According to Peiping, the proposal presents "a real test which the American side simply cannot evade." The text of the commentary indicated that the "compromise" envisaged by Peiping would involve Chinese Communist sovereignty over Formosa and occupancy of China's seat in the UN.

Satellite comment hastened to praise the Soviet "initiative" and accused the United States of continued pursuit of its "strong-arm policy." Bulgarian and East German commentaries admitted, however, that certain of the President's "very general peace-loving declarations...could not fail to arouse the interest of world opinion."

Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia particularly attacked the President's "unsolicited...concern" for the East European peoples. Subsequent declarations by Secretary Dulles and Under Secretary Smith, along with the statements emanating from the recent NATO conference, were cited as being in "striking contrast" to Eisenhower's peace appeals.

East German and Czech comments endorsed Communist efforts toward peace in Korea as a means of lessening world tension. They pointed out, however, that the "most important contribution" toward improving relations in Europe would be the peaceful solution of the German problem.

Although most of the Orbit comment, like the PRAVDA editorial itself, implied that the next move was up to the United States, a Bulgarian editorial added that "deeds and actions are needed from both sides."

The Hungarian, Bulgarian and Austrian Communist press selected isolated Western reaction to support the theme that the international situation is now more favorable for an East-West rapprochement than ever before, and that the West must seize every opportunity to take concrete measures in answer to the Soviet "peace" offers.

The Yugoslav press drew some comfort from the mildness, if not from the substance, of the PRAVDA reply. BORBA cautioned that it would be a mistake to conclude that Stalin's policy "was buried with him." It criticized as hypocritical PRAVDA's affirmations that the USSR has long sought an end to the Korean war and the admission of Communist China in the United Nations. It concluded, however, that "doors which have been shut for so long are now open for talks and concrete actions."

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The Soviet reply seems to have invoked an increased skepticism in the Austrian press regarding the Moscow "peace offensive." Several papers speak of the necessity for Soviet action rather than words. Moscow's brief reference to the Austrian Treaty question is regarded as of little significance.

NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

An early Radio ANKARA commentary carried a detailed analysis of the PRAVDA editorial, emphasizing that Moscow merely repeated its old contentions. The broadcast was especially critical of the Soviet stand on Germany and Eastern Europe, and said that the treatment of China showed that "the Soviet political outlook must be still governed by propaganda considerations and does not seem likely to change." The broadcast concluded that Moscow seems to expect an invitation to hold a conference. The Kremlin's answer to the President demonstrated, however, "that such a conference is doomed to remain abortive."

Preliminary Indian press comment in three leading Bombay newspapers looked with favor on the PRAVDA reply. The consensus was that the Malenkov regime had displayed a desire for world peace and that the Western powers must be willing to "pay some price" to secure it.

Subsequently, the New Delhi DAILY HINDUSTAN, which is consistently pro-US, commented further on President Eisenhower's speech -- welcoming his appeal to Russia to cooperate in establishing world peace. It pointed out, however, that Russia, like the United States, may have conditions for cooperation and suggested that it might be well to plan high-level discussions to find a way for satisfactory compromise.

FAR EAST

Other than the Peiping's reaction noted above, no Far Eastern comment is as yet available.

LATIN AMERICA

No comment has been received to date.

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**WORLD REACTION TO PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S
FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS
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The Hungarian press in a 21 April editorial which may have been an oblique reply emphasized the Hungarian peace policy. This was said to be based "on the invincible force represented by the Soviet Union and the peoples' democracies which was not only sufficient for its own defense, but adequate to help the peoples of the capitalistic countries struggling with economic crises. The imperialists are thus forced to admit that peaceful coexistence is more popular and realistic than a war policy."

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